

The Magazine

QUANTA

Vol. 30 Iss. 2

QL USERS AND TINKERERS ASSOCIATION

April/May Issue 2013

Can you make your own
QL based machine?

E-Reading the best way to
get the QUANTA Magazine?

We give you the latest
AGM news



Taking a leap since 1984

Information on the Association

Membership of QUANTA, the independent QL user group, is by annual subscription. The Membership Secretary can supply full details. Copies of the association's constitution & annual accounts are available from the Secretary. There is an extensive software library. There are active national subgroups. Details are given in the Member's Guide and in this magazine.

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COPY DATE for JUN/JUL 2013 ISSUE is:

5th JUN 2013

Please ensure that your copy reaches the editor on or before that date. Copy on Paper or Magnetic Media or by Email. Text & listings are preferred in ASCII format as text files, Microsoft™ Word Documents or in QL Quill formatted files. All graphic submissions in as higher resolution as possible, preferably in PNG format, other forms of submission can also be accepted, please contact the Editor for details.

Copy by Email to - editor@quanta.org.uk
All Contributions are Welcome.

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This is a post AGM issue following the QUANTA workshop in Manchester, visited by a few this year, it was particularly cold but fruitful nonetheless. The recent events (see the news section) regarding QL Today and its decision to cease publication in its present form. Our continued efforts (see back page advertisement and numerous editorials in the past) with seemingly desperate attempts to attract and provide members with a reasonable amount of varied information regarding the QL. A dwindling readership/membership continues to frustrate and concern us all.

As editor I tend to get involved in a number of informal discussions with people, normally by email as in today's society and culture this seems to be the most preferred method. I do realise that many of our QUANTA members have limited or even non-existent electronic communication which may seem strange in today's fast paced world. However before I digress too much, one such conversation revolved around submission for articles and not being able to think of any subject matter.

Now this may seem an obvious point to many and that 'it must be based around the QL' but actually this can be quite hard. Writers block can kick in quite easily, sitting in front of a blank piece of paper and wondering where to start! (for paper, read computer screen). Indeed it may seem to many that SuperBASIC programming would be more prolific if it were not for the exact same reason.

With that in mind I thought it prudent to offer some guidelines to all, about what we would like our existing and potential contributors to provide us with as 'copy' (technical term). Don't worry about your spelling or grammar not being up to scratch, that is something we can correct or leave as necessary. The following is a list of topics or areas to give you some food for thought as budding writers for the QUANTA magazine. The list is by no means exhaustive but will give you a starting point to go by and has been split in to three general areas.

Hardware

- ◆ A review of a piece of hardware you have recently seen, obtained or bought that is related or used with the Sinclair QL.
- ◆ A description of project that is large or small, something that you have, are undertaking or have completed. You could include the benefits of the hardware, the pitfalls, what could be improved if someone was to duplicate your work.
- ◆ An item you have repaired or replaced on your system or that you have adapted or improved.
- ◆ There maybe something you have a problem with, and that you are calling the QUANTA community for help. Even if this is resolved via other means (Forum/QL User list for example), do not assume every QUANTA member has access to other forms of support.
- ◆ You could write about your own setup that you use at home, what you have put together and use either on a regular basis or periodically.
- ◆ If you're a collector of QL items, what are the reasons for your collection, what do you have?
- ◆ Repairs to microdrive cartridges that have worked for you for example, that seems to crop up a lot on the Forum.

Software

- ◆ Small Listings - any number of lines really, from just a few to a couple of pages, single or multiple procedures and functions that you have written to either solve or explore a programming problem. Or even just for a bit of experimental fun.
- ◆ Long listings - no program is too big, no language too strange, whether its just concepts, SuperBASIC, block diagrams, Boolean logic, assembler, mnemonics (that's one for you George), C# C++ C- - or just plain C, Pascal, Fortran or even S*BASIC, anything about everything would be appreciated.
- ◆ Although the QL doesn't have every one it was interesting to read on Wikipedia (the fount of all knowledge) that there are around 1000 different languages listed. You could even send us

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an adapted listing from the QUANTA software library that you have modified or improved in some way. Corrected errors or changed existing programs in order to suit emulators or screens/colours etc.

- ◆ Any reviews of software - whether it is games, applications or utilities would be helpful. These could be new or even old versions, remember that we do have new members coming back to the QL community and missed developments and releases over the years.
- ◆ You could write about your favoured method of what you use on a regular basis including extensions you load in as a matter of preference including the order and why you load them in (i.e. for what purpose).
- ◆ Any request for program needs or even if you are stuck and would like suggestions or solutions to programming anomalies you may have.
- ◆ Any wants or needs or help in software projects you are undertaking or hope to undertake.

Other media

- ◆ Reviews of any other media such as books, magazines or even leaflets that others may appreciate.
- ◆ New developments that our illustrious News Editor may have missed on the Interweb.
- ◆ We are also particularly interested in areas such as the Java based SMSQ/e from a software perspective, the Raspberry Pi does have some hardware potential, if you have you been able to get a uQLx emulator working on the RasPi for example. I haven't as I don't know enough about Linux to resolve the 'nothing' that happens when I try. A simple step by step approach would be helpful assuming no knowledge at all for the reader.

Please also note there have been some minor changes to the contact details in the sub-group section at the back of the magazine, happy writing.



If you have QL-related news items that you'd like us to include on this page, please get in touch with News Editor- Dilwyn Jones at news@quanta.org.uk

SMSQ/e v3.15 and SMSQMulator Updates

Wolfgang Lernerz writes:

"Thanks to Marcel Kilgus, there are a certain number of bug fixes to SMSQE. V. 3.15" You can download the latest on the web site

www.wlernerz.com/smsqe

NEW:

You can now also download all binaries (except for QPC).

This new version also includes a 256 colours version for the GoldCard.

It also includes ptr_gen and wman (in the binaries) for non SMSQ/e systems. I haven't been able to test these!

A new version of SMSQmulator using the latest SMSQ/e is also out. v1.15 at the time of writing - News Editor

Website Developments

Lee Privett reports that he has set up four new tabs on his website to allow you to quickly call up four of the main sales sites of relevance to QL users.

For example, clicking on the eBay tab brings up a quick search of eBay QL entries, like the one shown in the picture below. SellMyRetro.com is unfortunately not included as yet.



<http://www.theql.co.uk>

RWAP Software

We have been working hard to safeguard the future of the Sinclair QL through creating an online QL Wiki backed by a repository of QL titles.

The QL Wiki enables people to see what software and hardware was produced for the Sinclair QL. The repository enables people to purchase working copies when their microdrive cartridges fail, or they move onto disks or emulators. Where we can, we obtain permission from the copyright holders to re-release items on the market.

This has enabled us to bring some of the titles back to the market as well as re-ignite interest in the Sinclair QL and its emulators.

Old favourites brought back to life include:

E.V.A., Vroom

Black Knight, Double Block

Jungle Eddi, The Lost Pharaoh

Pengi, the Lonely Joker

Microdeal's Flight Simulator, QL Hopper, The King,

Night Nurse and Cuthbert in Space

Mortville Manor, Darkside of the Moon (£10)

We still retain our existing catalogue, including:

Open Golf, Return to Eden,

Stone Raider II, The Prawn,

Hoverzone, Lost Kingdom of Zkul,

Deathstrikra, Horrorday,

Flightdeck and QWord

All games are available on disk or for use with Q-emuLator on the PC **from ONLY £5 each**.

Microdrive versions also available - from £10 each.
Memory / system limits may apply - please check before ordering.

Visit the QL Wiki for more details on software, books and hardware for the Sinclair QL:
www.rwapadventures.com/ql_wiki

RWAP Software

3 Dale View Court, Fulford, Stoke-on-Trent

Staffordshire ST11 9BA

Tel: 01782 398143

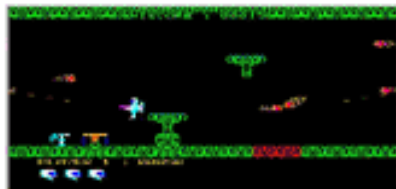
Email: rich@rwapservices.co.uk

Website:

www.rwapsoftware.co.uk or www.sellmyretro.com



Vroom by Pyramide



E.V.A. by Westway



Mortville Manor by Pyramide



Double Block by Francois Lancisult



Night Nurse by Microdeal

Compact Flash With Qubide

The following were suggested as something to try for those with a Qubide who would like to use a Compact Flash memory card instead of a traditional hard disk. Note that we haven't tried any of these so we don't know for certain that each and every one would work with Qubide, although it is well known that many such devices would work.

<http://www.titanwirelessonline.com/CF-to-IDE-Converter-R-A-p/cf-ider.htm>



(Picture from Titan Wireless)

Also 2 inch IDE 40 PIN cables are available (to use with a normal CF to IDE adapter), which you may need depending on the position and gender of the IDE connector:

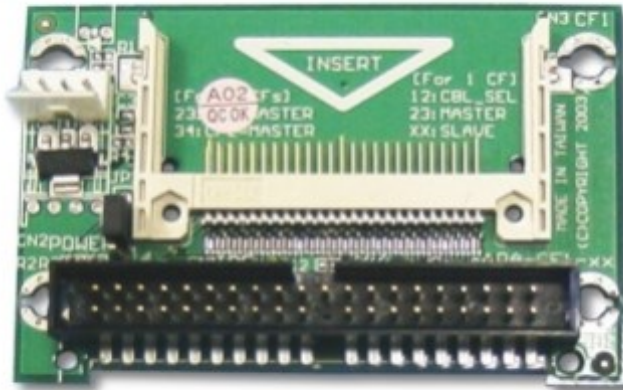
<http://www.ebay.com/itm/2-inch-40-Pin-Male-Male-IDE-Gender-Changer-Ribbon-Cable-/280666596825>



(Picture from Cables Online)

Another such device is available from LinITX in the UK.

<http://linitx.com/product/10022>



This company has a dual compact flash to DE adaptor:

<http://www.amazon.co.uk/StarTech-com-2-5in-Compact-Flash-Adapter/dp/B001E25LOS>



Hopefully, this will provide some idea of the kind of devices you can get for use with Qubide. We have not tested any of these devices so cannot be 100% sure they work with a Qubide, although some companies do describe their boards as not requiring specific driver software, should work with “most” IDE interfaces.

A simple search of the internet for “compact flash to IDE adaptor” should throw up plenty more such devices.

QL On A Stick SE

Is this the “smallest QL ever” ? QL On A Stick SE (the SE can stand for Special Edition or Smallest Edition, whichever you prefer!) is a version of the QL On A Stick CD supplied on a mini USB 2GB pen drive.

This measures just 27mm x 12mm and just 2mm thick. It plugs into a standard USB socket on a PC, yet is barely half the size of many USB pen (or “thumb”) drives. Including Qlay2, QL2K, QemuLator demo version, QPC2 demo version and SMSQmulator emulators, QL On A Stick SE also includes useful free software and manuals and comes complete with a short key ring cord and clip.

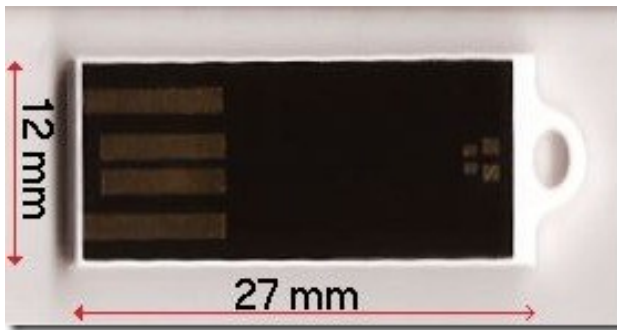
It costs just £10.00 plus postage from Dilwyn Jones.

Only a small number of these will be available as the mini-USB drives are in fairly short supply at this price. So in the future these might well become collectors’ items.



Compared to a household key

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And just 2mm thick!



Its packaging and comparison with a "standard" flash drive.

DJToolkit Update

There is an update to the DJToolkit from Norman Dunbar on the Toolkits page my website.

Version 1.16 fixes a minor issue with the GET_STRING function when used to fetch a null string at the end of a file in SMSQmulator WIN device and RAM device on QPC2.

Download it free from www.dilwyn.me.uk/tk/index.html

Launchpad Update

The launch of SMSQmulator revealed a few bugs in Launchpad, so the time was right for a good spring clean of the program and to add a few new features, as it had not been updated for some time.

For example, the program now remembers the user's last program screen size and position between sessions, a much requested feature, new resize menu with predefined size selections, bubble help, optional extensions filters for filename selection (e.g. only list colour theme `_thm` files), and desktop icons/Quicklaunch items can start Windows programs and files with QPC_EXEC on QPC2 systems (subject to QL filename length restrictions) by simply starting the command line option with the four characters "QPC:" (without the quotes).



The main bug fix was a fatal end of file error on SMSQmulator. This was fixed using the latest version of the DJToolkit from Norman Dunbar. Existing users of Launchpad can update to version 2.10 by sending me the master disks and return postage, or direct from my website by downloading password protected zip files (email me at launchpad@dilwyn.me.uk to let me know who you purchased the program from and I'll email back with the password to unzip the update).

Q-Dock

A brand new program which introduces a Mac-like docking station for QL programs. Occupying a small section at the edge of the screen, Q-Dock provides a small surface for icons for QL programs and you can start programs just by clicking on the icons.

The program can use GD2 graphics and WMAN2 windows, colour themes and sprites. 9 dock surfaces allow you to use up to 13 icons each, allowing a total of nearly 120 program icons, more than enough even for me!

The program allows for the use of non-rectangular dock images plus transparent windows within the limitations of the SMSQ windowing system. Docks can use 'alpha mask' graphical surfaces, allowing the use of semi-transparent docks. While it adds little to functionality, it does let you make the most of the high colour and window manager 2 facilities on modern QL compatible systems. After all, if Macs and PCs can have these graphical systems, why can't we on the QL? Especially as Tony Tebby and Marcel Kilgus put in so much work to develop the facilities in SMSQ/e.

A large variety of sprite files are available for use as icons with this program, along with a selection of dock graphics. It's easy to create suitable graphics by following the instructions supplied, probably the easiest method being to create the graphics as a PNG file using any Windows graphics program then using the Marcel Kilgus PNGCONV sprite converter program available from his website at :

<http://www.kilgus.net/smsqe/sprtconv.html>

to convert the PNG graphics to QL sprite graphic files.

If you have never used a software dock before, they look like a small shelf, often in 3d graphics, at the edge of your screen on which program icons lie. Using just icons, the program uses little screen space and even if you can't remember the name of a program associated with that icon, just hover the pointer over the icon and a small bubble help window

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appears with details. From there you can quickly start, pick and remove jobs. While they often give the impression of being just graphical gimmicks, they can be a great time-saving convenience.

Q-Dock will only run on a Window Manager 2 system, which means either fairly recent versions of SMSQ/E or QDOS using pointer environment version 2.0 or later, but best used on a GD2 graphics system in 256 colour (8-bit colour) or 16-bit colour graphics modes.

Available for just £10.00 from Dilwyn Jones and in due course from Quo Vadis Design.



Google Doodles

Keith Dunbar has supplied an email address we can use to petition Google to put up a "QL Is 30" Google logo next year, perhaps. From time to time, Google puts up custom logos, called Doodles, in place of its familiar colourful Google logo to celebrate milestones or certain subjects.

Keith writes: "If you want to suggest that Google puts a Doodle on their site to celebrate the QL the email address you need to contact is proposals@google.com "

QUANTA

QL USERS AND TINKERERS ASSOCIATION



Next QUANTA Sponsored Event

Annual General Meeting 2013 And Workshop, Date: Sat/Sun 13th/14th April

Opening on Saturday at 11.00 am (Doors open 10 am for setting up),

Sunday at 10.00 am with the AGM at 2.00 pm in the afternoon.

The Venue will be in Manchester at the
**3rd Davyhulme Scout Headquarters, "The Endeavour",
Conway Road, off Lostock Road, Davyhulme,
Manchester. M41 0TF. Near M60 J9.**

Further details from the Membership Secretary

John Gilpin, 181, Urmston Lane, Stretford

Manchester. M32 9EH (UK)

Tel. 0161 865 2872

Ask for our special 3 Year discount

Email: membership@quanta.org.uk

Website: <http://www.quanta.org.uk>



Mplanes

Dave Park writes:

I have assembled the remaining stock of TF Services' MPlane. These are a great upgrade if you're using a less reliable backplane.

MPlane is a low profile backplane to allow three QL expansions and the original motherboard or Aurora to be fitted in a case. It was originally designed for Qbranch's MinisQL, but can be used in any installation.

It is arranged two high and two wide, allowing the motherboard and first expansion (Gold Card, Super Gold Card or the new Goldfire) to be fitted side by side and firmly fixed to the case. Only light expansions (i.e. Qubide) need be mounted above - no more flying Super Gold Card!

Also provided is a standard ROM slot as an alternative when using Aurora, which doesn't have the standard connector. When used with Aurora, this ROM slot is fitted facing towards the case back, allowing access through the back without opening the case.

A 4 layer circuit board with noise reducing internal power and ground planes is used. Extra smoothing capacitors are fitted, and all sensitive signal lines have pull up/down resistors as necessary.

It powers off a standard IBM style 4-way connector. +12v/-12v (nominal) are generated on board for mouse/serial ports. It can be used off 5v only if floppy/hard disk drives are 5V only. In a tower case, connection of the standard 4 way power connector will supply both 5v and +12v. The case's reset switch can be connected to the backplane to reset the QL or Aurora if needed.

Size is 35 x 197mm

Price is £39 each, plus £9 shipping (£5 extra shipping for each additional MPlane). I accept PayPal to dave@sinclairql.com.

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I will start shipping MPlanes on March 22nd.

Please email me off-list if you would like one. I have a limited number.

I have posted photos of them here:

<http://www.qlforum.co.uk/viewtopic.php?f=6&t=505>

The MPlanes are available via SellMyRetro.com:

<http://www.sellmyretro.com/offer/details/Sinclair-QL-MPlane-interface---brand-new!-2665>



In the coming weeks I will also start selling the following:

(S)GC battery replacements. Yes, they're here and done at last. I have been testing them for a good time now, and they work really well. Finally, a permanent solution to the GC battery problem.

MultiROM: Two ROM images selectable by a switch. Ultra-low power to help keep your QL cool.

History Of Microdrives

An interesting article about the history of the Sinclair Microdrives can be found on The Register:

http://www.theregister.co.uk/2013/03/13/feature_the_sinclair_zx_microdrive_story/

68008 Retro Computer

Lee Privett writes:

“There is a seller on eBay who is selling 68000 kits saying, MC68008FN CPU + 128K SRAM, 128k EEPROM, ideal for designing a 68000 based Microcomputer.

I've downloaded the build document from here:

<https://sites.google.com/site/designyourown68000system/>

and the document looks impressive albeit mainly schematics and block diagrams, all the IC lead outs seem to be there. Just looking for other thoughts, if it would gather dust or worthwhile exploring. You can see the bidding here:

http://www.ebay.co.uk/itm/Design-your-own-68000-microcomputer-MC68008FN10-Sinclair-QL-Atari-ST-etc-/121079238185?pt=UK_BOI_Electrical_Components_Supplies_ET&hash=item1c30e28e29&autorefresh=true

The kit consists of :

- ⇒ MC68008FN10 PLCC52 CPU
- ⇒ 128K SRAM DIP32
- ⇒ 128K EEPROM W27C010
DIP32
- ⇒ 64K EEPROM PLCC32
- ⇒ GAL16V8 PLD
- ⇒ 7805 5V Regulator
- ⇒ All DIP/DIL/PLCC sockets
- ⇒ 10MHz Crystal

I don't know what half of these bits are but they sound good.”



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Has anyone bought one of these yet? If so, please do send us an article about them. It would be interesting to find out if QDOS or SMSQ could be made to work on them, for example. Nonetheless, it is indicative of the level of interest there is in retro-computers like the QL.

Update: I have purchased one of the kits, now looking for some inspirational direction — anyone? (Ed.)

Norman Dunbar's Website

Norman Dunbar writes:

"My website is once more online. I've been hacked for some unknown reason. Well, DOS'd rather than hacked.

As soon as I allow users to self-register, I get hit by shed loads of "people" registering which fills up my disc allowance, bandwidth and fills my own email inbox with " a new user has registered" emails.

So far today I've deleted quite a large number of users, upgraded the Wiki software to the latest stable version and also, changed the template in use because the previous one no longer works with the latest Wiki software. Hopefully, it's not too bad, but if you don't like it, let me know and I'll see what else there might be that is suitable. (Or maybe, just maybe, build my own!)

If anyone requires to register - because you want to update or change stuff - contact me as per the "registration" section on the front page. I'm no longer allowing self-registrations because I just end up back in the loop every time I enable the link.

If you need to register, I'll set you up with a username and password, which you can change as appropriate to something secure!"

QL Today

“Cancelled Cancelled Cancelled Cancelled” reads the front cover of the penultimate issue of QL Today. After 17 volumes, rising costs and the lack of contributors has forced QL Today to call it a day.

There will be one more issue in September instead of the summer, which will give them a chance to scan volumes 16 and 17 “so that readers can have a complete electronic archive of every issue of the magazine”, as the Editor says in his Editorial. If you would like to submit an article or letter for the last issue, please send it to QL Today by 31st May 2013.

Your News Editor was himself ‘Editor of QL Today’ during its first decade and so this news fills me with grief. When I gave up the job of Editor (which later allowed me to join the QUANTA committee), Geoff Wicks took the reins and steered the magazine through the remaining years. Credit is also due to the Co-editor, Bruce Nicholls, who did a lot of work behind the scenes without becoming as well known as Geoff Wicks.

Geoff and Jochen say that they have chosen this course as they “would rather close the magazine while it is still relatively strong than struggle on before letting our readers down.”

However, all is not lost. QUANTA magazine (ironically the longest running QL magazine of them all!) continues and there is some talk at attempting to create some form of electronic QL magazine, or some form of web initiative. It is too early to know yet if this will happen or not, or indeed what form it might take. As Geoff Wicks says, “There can be life after QL Today. The challenge is there. Who will take it up?”



<http://www.qlday.com/>

With the publication of the membership statistics at the end of last year, John Gilpin was able to announce that readership of the electronic magazine had passed the 50 mark. One third of QUANTA members now take the magazine electronically compared with about one fifth a year previously.

Officially the first electronic magazine was issue 1 of volume 24, February/March 2007, although trial issues had been available to committee members and testers for about 18 months before that.

Now the electronic magazine has a firm place in QUANTA it is easy to forget how bold a step it was to produce the first trial issues in 2005. For some time the magazine had been produced in PDF format for transmission to the printer, but it was no easy matter to adapt this for sending to members. Nowadays we think nothing of emailing files of 5Mb or more, but in 2005 broadband was far from universal. Many of us were still on dial-up services and a 1Mb download was large. The printer needed a high quality PDF file to ensure a good print quality, but this would be too large for members still on dial-up. The aim was to have a magazine of just 0.5Mb.

To add to the complications QUANTA did not have a magazine editor. Although he already had heavy QUANTA duties as Treasurer and Membership Secretary, John Gilpin took on the task of acting magazine editor - a task he was to perform until 2011 when Lee Privett took over.

The task was a formidable one because John first had to learn to produce the magazine on a desk top publishing program and then adapt it into a suitable form for emailing to members. Much of the committee discussion centred on how we could bring the file size down. Two of us, Chairman John Mason and myself, wanted the magazine to become an A4 publication. John had, in fact, jumped the gun in his report to the 2005 AGM:

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"...it is intended to move from A5 to A4 format. This change is cost neutral and brings the format in line with current general scientific journal practice."

I felt that an A4 format would give more flexibility in design and would be easier for members to print out than A5. There was also the possibility that fewer pages and thus fewer page overheads could reduce the PDF file size.

The plans for A4 were abandoned when it became clear that the four other members of the committee and the majority of members wanted the magazine to remain A5.

The main ideas for reducing the file size were a restriction on the resolution of images and, more controversially restricting advertising to text only.

The first electronic magazine, distributed only to committee members, weighed in at 906Kb. It was produced in landscape format with two A5 pages on an A4 sheet. The committee found the page numbering confusing. Page 32 was adjacent to page 1 and then on the following sheet page 2 adjacent to page 31.

The idea was that the magazine could be printed out on A4 sheets and then stapled together in the correct order. The committee expressed a preference for simple consecutive page numbering. From then on the electronic magazine was produced as consecutive A5 pages and the file size usually was just over 1Mb.

By the time the magazine became available to members the file size had been reduced to just under 1Mb throughout 2006, and then further reduced to below 0.5Mb throughout 2007 and 2008. However broadband had become near universal and in an article in the Dec 2008/Jan 2009 issue of the QUANTA Magazine. Duncan Neithercut was critical of the electronic magazine:

QL Today

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Issue 3
March - May
2013

ISSN 1432-5454

The Magazine about QL, QDOS,
Sinclair Computers, SMSQ...

**This is the latest
issue 3!**

54 pages A4 again!

**You can still
subscribe and get the
existing issues 1 to 3
and the forthcoming
issue 4.**



www.QLToday.com

Jochen Merz Software

Kaiser-Wilhelm-Str. 302
47169 Duisburg, Germany

Fax +49 203 502012
Email: SMSQ@J-M-S.com

SMSQ.J-M-S.COM

QPC2 Version 3 + SMSQ/E Software QL-Emulator for PC's	EUR 59,90	
QPC2 Version 3 - Upgrade from QPC2 Version 2	EUR 19,90	
QPC2 Version 3 - Upgrade from QPC2 Version 1	EUR 39,90	
QPC Print - printer emulation driver for QPC	EUR 39,90	
Agenda Agenda program for WMAN and Prowess [V1.09]	EUR 14,90	
Suqcess Database front-end for WMAN [V2.05]	EUR 19,90	
QD2003 Pointer-Environment-Editor [V8.01]	EUR 39,90	
QD2003 Upgrade from QD98 [V8.01]	EUR 9,90	
QD2003 Upgrade from previous versions [V8.01]	EUR 19,90	
QMAKE Pointer-driven MAKE for GST/Quanta Assembler [V4.31]	EUR 14,90	
BASIC Linker	[V1.21]	EUR 14,90
WINED Floppy/Harddisk Sector- & File-Editor [V1.26]	EUR 14,90	
FIFI II File-Finder - Extremely usefull [V4.31]	EUR 14,90	
FIFI II Upgrade from Fifi V1, 2 or 3 [V4.31]	EUR 9,90	
EPROM Manager	[V3.02]	EUR 14,90
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QSpread2003 Upgrade from QSpread2001 [V4.04]	EUR 9,90	
QSpread2003 Upgrade from V1 [V4.04]	EUR 29,90	
QPAC I Utility programs [V1.11]	EUR 19,90	
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QTYP II Spell checker [V2.17]	EUR 24,90	
QPTR Pointer Toolkit [V0.30]	EUR 39,90	
DISA Interactive Disassembler [V3.04]	EUR 29,90	
typeset-ESC/P2 text87 driver for all ESC/P2 printers (incl. Stylus)	EUR 24,90	
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CueShell for QPC [V2.14]	EUR 20,00	
SER Mouse software mouse driver for serial mice	EUR 10,00	
EasyPTR Version 4 [V4]	EUR 59,90	
EasyPTR Version 4 - Upgrade from earlier versions [V4]	EUR 39,90	
text87plus4patch - now for QPC, QXL, Q40, Q60, Aurora	EUR 10,90	
QDT - QL Desktop program	EUR 59,90	
QMENU Version 8 - New! with new, printed Manual [V8.02]	EUR 24,90	
QMENU Version 8 - Update from earlier Versions, also with printed manual	EUR 17,90	
QMENU Version 8 - New/Update for QL Today subscribers, with prtd manual ONLY	EUR 14,90	

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QUANTA Magazine

"The email distributed .pdf magazine is a doppelganger for the paper magazine! None of the opportunities of electronic publishing have been used, not even colour!"

He amplified this further in the Aug/Sep 2009 issue:

"If the electronic QUANTA magazine offered substantial advantages over the paper format then I strongly suggest its uptake in general would be markedly greater. For example colour would be nice and high resolution photos of meetings and screen shots would be nice."

Duncan's intervention seems to have had an effect. There were efforts to improve the magazine which is now produced in colour and higher resolution. Given that most people now have broadband the file size restriction has become obsolete. The Dec2012/Jan2013 magazine weighed in at 4Mb and the Feb/Mar 2013 at 2.4Mb.

Until now I have always resisted opting for the electronic magazine mainly because it is in A5 format, which is wasteful to print out unless you have a printer capable of handling A5 double side printing. I also had no desire to boot up a computer and then read an entire magazine from a computer screen. However e-readers have changed my mind.

Last year Dilwyn Jones spent a lot of time converting QL documents into e-reader formats arguing that you could take a whole library of QL reference works to shows for example.

Dilwyn stimulated me to buy an e-reader, but not for QL purposes. I frequently visit archives for family history research and many of them, for security reasons, have strong restrictions on the amount of paper you can take into the reading room. There are no objections to e-readers and it would be possible for me to store all my family history files on an e-reader. Another use was for storing timetables when

travelling, which proved invaluable earlier this year when public transport was frequently disrupted by the winter weather.

E-readers come in two types monochrome and colour. In general the colour ones are more like tabloid computers and have a shorter battery life and inferior screens to monochrome. As I was using an e-reader purely for reference purposes I felt monochrome was more suitable.

Kindle is probably the best known e-reader, but I opted for Kobo as it was reputed to handle non-native files better than Kindle. E-readers are at their best running native files, epub for Kobo and mobo for Kindle. Files in these formats can be adjusted for various things such as font, font size, line spacing and margin, but this is more difficult with non native files such as pdf, the file format of the QUANTA Magazine.

To illustrate pdf problems I have three photos of my e-reader screen showing three different publications.

Fig. 1 shows QL Today. This is an A4 publication with a page size of 21cm x 29cm. The screen on my e-reader is 9cm x 12cm. Obviously to read the page comfortably you would have to have either very good eyesight or a magnifying glass.

The alternative is to increase the size of the image and then use scrolling, which is not a convenient way to read the text. Another problem is the font type and the narrow space between lines.



Fig. 2 shows a page from a document on my website. This too is A4 size and, although it is more legible than QL Today with a better font and more spacing, it is still not easy to read.

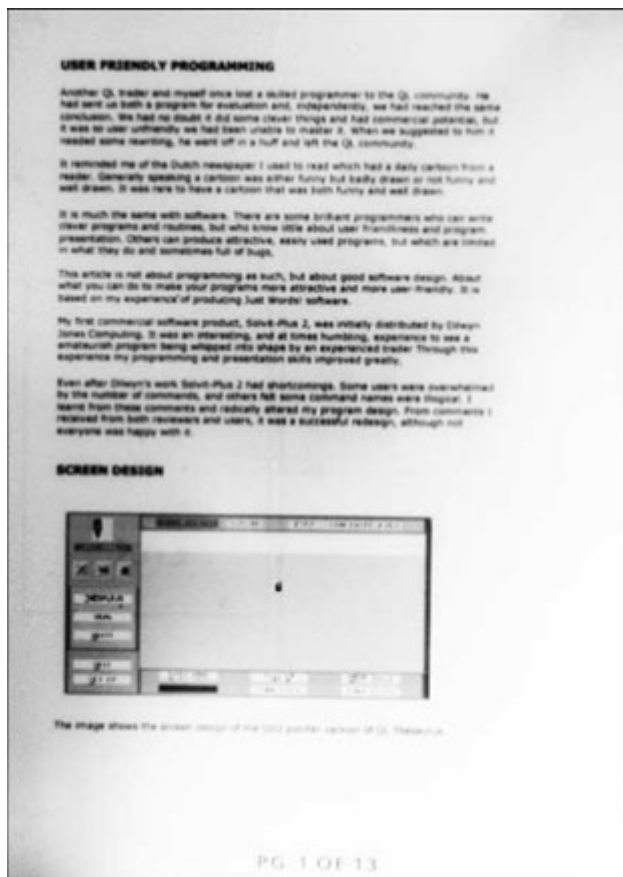


Fig. 3 is a page from the QUANTA Magazine. You can immediately see the difference from the other two documents. It is an A5 publication with a page size of 14.5cm x 21cm, the font is clear and the font size and line spacing optimal.

QUANTA Magazine

QUANTA A.G.M. 2013

Standing Orders and the Suspense Account having been reduced to zero at 31/12/2012, is now standing at £235.50 and climbing.

As a result of this, I will have to write a further 20 plus letters to find out what our members expect me to do with their payment. (although I won't hold my breath while waiting for the replies!)

The current membership Database now looks something like this:-

Full members taking eMag	42	
Full members taking Printed Magazine	56	
Membership Lapsed	3	not paid since 2010
Membership Lapsed	27	not paid since 2011
Resigned during 2013	3	
Honorary Members (eMag)	2	
Honorary Members (Post)	6	
Associate Members - all eMag	4	
Committee Members (eMag)	3	
Committee Members (Post)	5	
TOTAL	151	

Well, so much for the everyday life of your treasurer. Now let's look at the accounts for 2012.

Taking a quick look at the Balance Sheet, the "Bottom Line" shows a loss of £322 for the financial year ended 31/12/2012. This may seem quite a lot of money, but compared with the same figure last year it is only half the loss of the financial year ended 31/12/2011. I think that what we need to do is to look at each entry on the Income and Expenditure Account in turn.

The depreciation of the Projector and screen, purchased three years ago has now been completed, the final £113 showing as depreciation under the expenditure items on the P & L Account (Profit and Loss Account is just another way of saying Income and Expenditure Account). Returning to the items in the order that they show on the P & L Account, then looking at the income items, subscriptions total is higher than it has been for some time because the subscription amount has increased and this is the first full year of this increased figure. The use of our PayPal Account has reduced slightly, resulting in a reduction of Credit card charges. The AGM Dinner receipts of £547 is offset by the expenditure for this event of £507. Hence, we should only be looking at the £40 profit made on this event. Donations

Page 14 of 20

PG. 14 OF 20

In short the QUANTA Magazine is almost tailor made for e-readers. My only criticism is that some screen shots do not reproduce well. Perhaps it was just as well the QUANTA Magazine did not convert to A4.

The electronic magazine has other advantages. I have already referred to colour and higher quality images. Internet links are live and you can just click on them so that you do not have to worry about typing errors. It is also possible to use cut and paste techniques to capture SuperBASIC programs and thus save a lot of typing time. And, finally, if you like to keep your magazines, your archive will be much smaller. 15 volumes of QL Today used to take up a space of 21cm x 29cm x 27cm on my bookshelf. They are now all on one DVD with a copy on my PC hard disk.

Come the New Year it may be worthwhile to consider changing to the electronic magazine and save yourself a few pounds in postal charges on the way. Or more than a few if you are an overseas member.

I received copy from Geoff Wicks regarding his experiences with e-readers and the subject of electronic versions of paper based books and you may have just read this in the preceding article. It is coincidence that I was already in discussions with the News Editor regarding my experiences with the PDF version of the QUANTA magazine.

There has been much discussion regarding reading text on screen verses text on paper. A book is a book is a book and other such quotes in its defence against reading text from screen has been debated as early as 1982 (pre QL) <https://www.ischool.utexas.edu/~adillon/Journals/Reading.htm>

This argument will always have its supporters and opponents and the debate is unlikely to change in the short term. As Harry Hill would say in "TV Burp", now I like reading books, and I like reading from computer screens, but which one is better? FIGHT! However all of this started when screen resolutions (not screen size) were consistently static and of poor quality by today's standards.

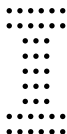
This resolution did not change a great deal for many years, that was until the new millennia where it began to improve and was brought to the mass market and popular electronic systems.

We first have to understand resolution and what we actually see on screen. The standard for VDUs or monitors at the beginning of the 'PC era' was 72 dpi (dots per inch) meaning that for one measured inch across the screen of the VDU, it would contain 72 dots of information.

For simplistic purposes let say the visible screen measured 10 inches horizontally across from left to right, then the displayed information would be 72 x 10 equals 720 dots across the screen. The following images used to describe the various effects have been checked in monochrome and can be differentiated.

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People with fairly normal sight would be able to see these dots, text on the screen would be made up of these dots, characters are just representations of these dots in which our brains are trained to recognise and even join the dots up with imaginary lines (however that's another lecture). If a '.' represents a screen dot then you should be able to recognise this single character, a 9x6 letter I.



This is all fine and acceptable and more or less what we were used to when the Sinclair Spectrum, QL and other visually displaying devices were originally about in the early 1980s. What if the screen was 20 inches across? A larger display of course, larger text but the resolution of the screen remained at 72 dpi, which meant the electronics of the device had to (reproduce) stretch the horizontal and vertical images.

How good it did this determined the quality of what you saw on the screen. The information was still the same, the resolution (i.e. 72 dpi) was still the same but the visual display was twice as big. Easy, you say double everything up, keep the quality. Maybe, but now have a screen with a physically horizontal size of 21.5 inches and you then start to see the complexities.

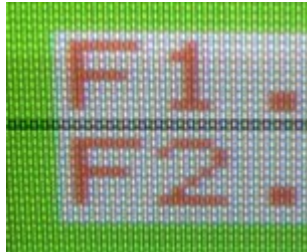
What the electronics in the display system does, is generate dots that do not exist in the original image, technically called interpolation (i.e. fills in the gaps), I am being a little simplistic here for the sake of understanding a rather complex process. The following image is a photograph of the start-up screen from a Microvetic Cub designed for the black box QL



The green output only from an RGB system showing 18 pixels

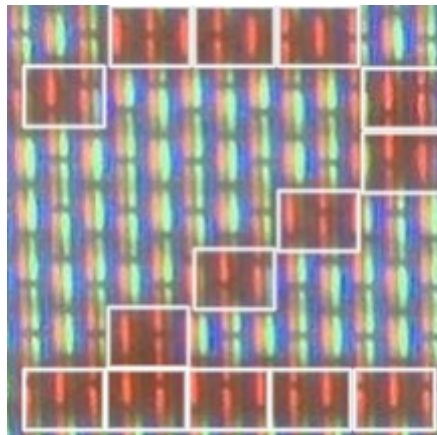
QUANTA Magazine

What the previous image shows is that although the individual dots are illuminated (that would also be another lecture) the gaps between the dots are also partially green adding a slight overlap or fuzziness to the image pixels. A larger portion of the start-up screen is now shown.



The screen resolution in the picture above is 72 dpi, and you are seeing around 56 pixels across, the band in the middle has been darkened for you to count (if you so wish). Each pixel made up from 3 colours of red, green and blue and even when all three colours are illuminated (i.e. white), you can still see the individual pixels and the gaps in-between.

Now, I want to concentrate on the character '2' for a moment, to clarify the complexity of what we see on a 72 dpi screen. I have drawn white boxes around the image for clarity.



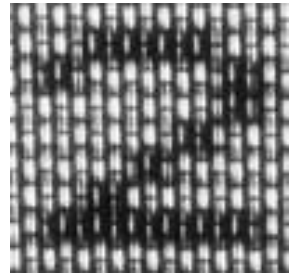
The '2' image above has three resolutions that we can refer to.

QUANTA Magazine

- a. The screen resolution being displayed (as before) is 72 dpi and we are seeing 13 dots horizontally .
- b. The information resolution (i.e. the resolution of the whole displayed data) is the standard black box QL screen resolution of 512 dots horizontally, and the image above is showing just 5 of those possible 512. So the information is being stretched by a factor of $13/5 = 2.6$ and is quite visible (this is important for later)
- c. The image resolution used is actually 218 dots horizontally

The quality of the image therefore doesn't actually improve just by making what you see larger, but the quality of any image will improve if you first increase the information resolution before increasing the display or screen resolution. Likewise seeing 'low resolution' images on densely packed displays will appear sharp and clear, and this is the technology now coming in to mainstream visuals.

Text and images on a VDU never looked that good at 72 dpi, that is until the iPhone was released, it had a screen resolution of 138 dpi, nearly twice the resolution of standard VDUs, twice as much screen information, which meant the brain had less processing to do in order understand the visuals (i.e. easier to see graphics and to read text).



Today's monitors and VDU screens have come a long way with increased resolution, these displays are no longer limited to cathode ray gun construction. LED & LCD to name just two modern technologies are prominent in today's electronics. Mobile phones, smart phones, tablets, netbooks, laptops are no longer limited to the 72 dpi quality.

So where is this leading?

The technology of some displays, such as the Apple iPad and the Apple iPhone and some Apple Notebooks (laptops) now have what is referred to as a 'retina screen'.

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The screenshot shows the Quo Vadis Design website homepage. At the top left is the logo 'QUO VADIS DESIGN' with the tagline 'Independent Information Technology Services'. To the right, it says 'QL/QDOS/SMSQ/E Software'. Below this is a navigation bar with links for 'Home', 'Products', 'Support', 'Company', and 'Contact'. The main content area is divided into three columns. The left column has a 'Welcome' section with a paragraph about the company's software and a photo of a vintage computer keyboard. The middle column has a 'News' section with two items: 'QVD QL News Blog - keep up to date News Blog' dated 04/10/2009 and 'Quo Vadis Design Website Launched' dated 06/04/2008. The right column has a 'FEATURED PRODUCT' section with a box for 'QPG II' by '3 Head Alphas' and a 'BUY NOW!' button. At the bottom of the page, there is a copyright notice 'Copyright © 2008 Quo Vadis Design. All Rights Reserved.' and a footer with navigation links: 'Home | Products | Support | Company | Contact | Blog'.

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'Retina' is Apple's term for a screen where from a 'normal' reading distance the actual pixels (dots) being used to generate images are not discernable with the naked eye.

The resolution is around 227 dots per inch, technically very high quality for a light generated image and not to be compared with say a photographic print of 600dpi as this is a light reflective image.

All this means is that the readability of text and the clarity of images is increasingly easy on the eye. What follows are some examples of visuals of how the QUANTA magazines look in the bookstore on the iPad and how the text from some of these are displayed.



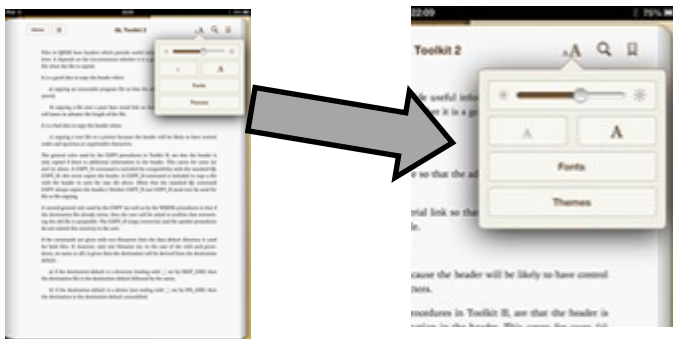
Some of Dilwyn's e-Books

QUANTA Magazine

Here is the section in my iBookshelf containing all the PDFs since re-joining QUANTA. PDFs are displayed automatically and aesthetically ring bound.



Options within e-books allow text to be made larger for ease of use and the font changed.



One final point, the graphics will never fully do justice to any article, to make your own decision about whether to obtain an e-reader, you should always experience hands on and in person.

QUANTA Membership Secretary's Updated Report for Year 2012

As at 14th April 2013 the QUANTA Membership was made up as follows: (2012 year-end figures are given in brackets for comparison). Figures given as nnE denote the number of members taking the Electronic version of the Magazine. All other members take the Printed copy which is posted to their home address.

	UK		OS	
Full Members	63	25E (110 27E)	19	14E (21 15E)
Associate Members	6	6E (4 4E)	Nil	(Nil)
Honorary Members	6	2E (6 2E)	2	(2)
Committee Members	8	3E (8 4E)	Nil	(Nil)
TOTALS	83	36E (128 37E)	21	14E (23 15E)
Combined Total	104	50E (151 52E)		

Records show that we have been notified that 3 of our members have died and 2 have 'Gone Away'.

25 members have paid part of their subscription and are additional to the above figures. None of these members have responded in any way to letters sent out to them. Their membership status is marked as "Lapsed".

A further 21 members have not paid their subscription for 2013 (19UK and 2 OS)

John Gilpin

Honorary Membership Secretary.

For many years, QUANTA has had to juggle financially with various unknowns one of which has been the cost of sending the printed paper version of QUANTA Magazine to its members who prefer that format over the electronic eMag, which of course is delivered free of charge by email.

As our Year-End has been chosen at the end of the calendar year, this means that decisions have to be made in advance of the AGM which, the QUANTA Constitution states (clause 7.1) is to be held on or before 30th April in each year. While this gives us (just) sufficient time to prepare the Annual Report and The Treasurer's Report together with the audited Income and Expenditure Account and Balance sheet for the period ending the previous December 31st, it does mean that any decisions made before the AGM are made in good faith on behalf of the QUANTA Membership.

Postage surcharges are even more difficult to estimate since Royal Mail has, for some years, introduced their postage rates about the beginning of April for the following twelve month period. During the last two or three years, it has been so difficult to estimate accurately around October (in order to notify our members of the following year's Membership Fee), that we have taken the Royal Mail figure in April, but not introduced it into our Membership Fee until the following January. Thus, we would be making a loss on the postage rates between April and November each year and we have added a 5% increase to the postage rates in order to off-set some of these losses.

Over the past two years we have almost broken even on the postage charged by Royal Mail measured against the postage surcharges collected from our members.

The good news is that on April 2nd 2013 Royal Mail notified its users that there would be no increases in postal rates (those that we use anyway)

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during the following twelve month period. This means that the Total Membership Fee for 2013 – the sum of the Subscription Rate as agreed by the QUANTA Membership at the AGM in 2011, plus the postage surcharge for those who have opted to continue to take the printed paper format QUANTA Magazine – will be the same as it was for 2012. The Subscription rate will remain at £18.00 for all full members and £5.00 for all Associate Members while the postage rates will remain at £4.00 for Magazine postage to a UK address, £22.50 for Magazines posted to a European address and £29.50 for Magazines posted to a 'Rest of the World' address.

Whether this means that Royal Mail will increase its charges next year by more than we might envisage, only time will tell. All our members who live in the 'Rest of the World' zones have now unanimously changed to the freely delivered colour eMag together with most of the European members. Any member who currently has his/her magazine posted to their home address may try out the colour eMag version (in .pdf format) completely free of charge to see if that format is suitable for them and thus save themselves the postage surcharge. Simply send me an email <membership@quanta.org.uk> notifying me of the email address to use to send your free coloured copy of the latest issue and you will be able to make the choice for yourselves.

Our Three-year discount (a saving of £6.00) will continue to be offered throughout 2013 – just click on the three-year button on the subscription page of the QUANTA Web Site.

www.quanta.org.uk/members/subscribe-to-quanta

The cost of putting on one or two day workshops is under discussion at present and the numbers attending the event in 2013 will have great bearing upon the results of these discussions. Let's hope for a good turnout.

Members wishing to submit helpline requests via email can use the email address helpline@quanta.org.uk or if you prefer to use traditional post, please send the helpline request to me via the address printed inside the front cover of the magazine.

Obviously, we cannot guarantee to answer every query we receive, but we will do our best! Where we have been unable to answer the queries, we may print the help request as an open request in the magazine to ask if any of the readers can come up with a solution. And, of course, if readers feel that they have a better solution than we came up with, or would like to correct any errors we make, please write to us!

Q. What is a Config Block?

A. A configuration block is a list of settings built into an executable

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program. The beauty of it is that the author of the program can define which settings can be altered by the user. Then you can alter these settings with a program called Config, or a pointer driven version called MenuConfig, which search though the program code for this list then lets you alter these settings.

For example:

- 1) Default drive
- 2) Screen colours
- 3) Where to save files to
- 4) Choice of formats

If you want to make one for a program of your own there are packages such as Basconfig, FileConfig, Uconfig etc out there which let you create config blocks for compiled BASIC programs. They can be used for uncompiled, but most are a bit clumsy unless the program is compiled.

There's two forms of Config Block. The original level 1 just puts a block of code with a list of settings into a program, you run another program to configure those settings and that's that.

Jochen Merz made a 'level 2' form, which uses a pointer driven MenuConfig program, which learns the settings for any program using Level 2 blocks.

There are some articles about Config Blocks and the use of the Config and MenuConfig programs on my website :

<http://www.dilwyn.me.uk/docs/articles/config.zip>

and

http://www.dilwyn.me.uk/docs/manuals/Config_level_1.pdf

and

<http://www.dilwyn.me.uk/config/index.html>

Q. I have read many times of the loss of the QL executable file header when a QL program is saved on a Windows hard drive, yet I still don't understand what it means. I'd have expected the file to be shorter if something is lost, but it isn't.

A. Oh dear, it doesn't seem to matter how often I explain this, it just keeps cropping up! QL files saved on other operating system hard disks consist of two parts, the file itself (the body of the program if you like) and the QL file header, a 64 byte block of code which is separate to the file. When you save a QL file to another operating system's hard disk (or any formatted media, not just hard disks), the file itself is correctly and fully saved. What is not saved is the 64 byte header block, in particular the file type byte and dataspace values which signal to the QL that it is a program which can be executed.

In the case of simple data files, including types such as document files, SuperBASIC programs, databases, spreadsheets and the like, this happens not to matter. In the case of executable programs (programs you start with an EXEC or EXEC_W command) it is the loss of this header information which is of concern.

If a QL program has been stored on a PC hard disk outside of the QDOS or SMSQ environment then it is 99.9% certain of being lost, as you will find out when you transfer it to a QL and try to execute it.

Most likely, you will receive an error message which says "Bad parameter" or a related message. There is no easy guaranteed way of restoring this header unless you are knowledgeable about QL filing systems, SEXEC commands, dataspaces and so on, although a bit of trial and error with a little bit of a BASIC program like this MAY work, but it does involve a bit of guesswork and luck if you don't have the exact information to hand. It needs Toolkit 2 extensions.

QUANTA Magazine

```
100 filename$ = 'flp1_duffprog_exe' : REM faulty
program
110 filename2$ = 'flp1_goodprog_exe' : REM fixed
program
120 f1 = FLEN(\filename$)
130 base = ALCHP(f1)
140 IF base <= 0 THEN STOP : REM unable to
allocate memory
150 LBYTES filename$,base
160 guess_dspace_bytes = 2048 : REM a guess at
the required dataspace value
170 SEXEC filename2$,base,f1,guess_dspace_bytes
180 RECHP base
```

The value set in line 160 is a guess at the required dataspace value for the program file. Dataspace, as the name implies, is a given size of memory set aside for this program to store its data within. Unless you know someone with a good copy of the program who could check it and tell you, the best bet is to try a low value such as 1024 or 2048 in line 160, then after saving the patched copy, try to execute it as normal and if it complains it's not got enough space, try increasing the value until it seems to work.

It's certainly not a tidy solution to this issue. The best solution is not to let it happen in the first place by not saving QL executables to non-QDOS non-SMS media.

You may be aware of a facility called Native File Access, whereby some emulators such as Q-emuLator, QL2K and SMSQmulator can save QL executables to a PC or Mac hard disk without losing the header. What they do is to modify the file, adding the 64 byte header to the start or end of the file (or in the case of QL2K storing it separately). The trouble is that these are generally specific to the emulator concerned, and since the

files are modified, they may not work when copied to another environment.

Generally speaking, the COPY command in these emulators takes care of the modifying invisibly to the user, for example, copy a modified native file access file from a QemuLator native file access directory on a Windows hard drive to a QL format floppy disk and the COPY command will automatically add or remove the header to or from the file without you needing to do anything special.

QPC2 is a special case. It has a device driver called the DOS device, allowing you to transfer files between the QL devices and the Windows hard drive. But it doesn't copy the executable file header. If you save the QL executable program to the DOS device, then copy it back to a QL device, it will not work correctly without manual restoration of the file header. As you may have guessed by now, the whole subject can be a very complex and fiddly one and the best solution by far is to avoid the whole issue by not saving a QL executable program to a non-QL medium!

Q. I downloaded a zipped QL program from the internet. How do I transfer it to a QL?

A. Oh dear, another question which just keeps cropping up no matter how often and how hard I try to explain it. This has been covered more than once before in past issues and there are articles on my website on the subject at;

<http://www.dilwyn.me.uk/gen/pcqlxfer/index.html>

Be aware you do need some knowledge of the subject and don't expect instant results – people often ask for a step by step guide, but that could easily fill a whole issue if not a whole book, and anyway it varies depending on the platform and emulator used. Try not to run before you can walk.

Q. I'd like to make my program read a mouse without having to use the pointer environment.

A. Err, why? With a QIMI and pointer environment serial mouse, this may not be practical and you should not try to pursue this approach without using the pointer interface. There are some mouse interfaces which convert the mouse movement to cursor arrow key presses a bit like how joysticks work – for example, the GC Mouse project at;

<http://www.dilwyn.me.uk/docs/hardware/index.html>

or Simon Goodwin's DIY mouse project in DIY Toolkit volume I at;

<http://www.dilwyn.me.uk/tk/index.html>

These might help achieve what you want if you are prepared to write your programs to be controlled by cursor arrow key presses.

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Sarah Gilpin

QUANTA held their twenty-ninth Annual General Meeting this weekend at "The Endeavour" 3rd Davyhulme (Lostock) Scout Headquarters, Manchester. As expected the numbers were disappointing with only four members attending from outside the immediate area, of which two were Committee members. We were sorry to receive an apology from Rich Mellor for his non-attendance (because he has damaged his foot and cannot drive), but were delighted to welcome him as he attended the AGM on Skype. We did receive five proxy votes, at least one from abroad. The day was enlivened by some young visitors, (potential members?), who showed an encouraging interest in the robots on display and the A & E bench, asking the inevitable "what" and "why" questions.

This clearly demonstrates the apathy of QUANTA members, who could at the very least have sent proxy forms and who had been given the opportunity to attend using Skype.

QUANTA Magazine

George Gwilt gave a fascinating talk on “filling”, where he demonstrated the process and programming he had worked on to accurately fill an irregular shape. This turned into a lively discussion with ideas flying round the room both to help George progress further and possibly for others to work along similar lines. Thank you George.

During the weekend John Gilpin notified Alison Southern (Secretary) of his resignation both as Treasurer and Membership Secretary and as a Committee member, to be effective from the date of the AGM 2014. This was announced by Alison at the meeting. The Committee wish to thank John for his many years as both a Committee member and as an Officer. We are now looking for an enthusiastic QUANTA member to volunteer to take over from John.

The reports published in the AGM 2013 booklet were all approved, with only one amendment; in the Membership Report, Full Members should read 110 27E (131 18E) not 10 27E (131 18E) as printed. Mrs Armstrong was confirmed as the auditor for 2014 and the Committee wish to thank for all her work over the last few years as our auditor. John Gilpin wished to express his personal thanks for the time Mrs Armstrong spent with him and the new Windows 7 friendly accounts package that is now used instead of Sage Line 50.

Looking to the next twelve months we are pleased to say that we have a new web provider and we can offer space on our web site at a small annual charge. Anyone who wishes to know more should contact Keith Dunbar (information on the inside front cover of the magazine). Dilwyn Jones will add the News and Helpline as soon as time permits (in between dealing with unwanted water features in the house caused by the bad weather). There are plans to add the electronic magazines prior to 2012.

The Committee also started to discuss the AGM for 2014, when we hope to provide an interesting weekend, starring all Sinclair computers, to celebrate QL is 30. We have a couple of potential venues in mind that we are looking into.

Finally I wish to thank Jochen Merz, Geoff Wicks and others for all their hard work over the years in publishing QL Today and I am sure that their readers will miss it. QUANTA would welcome any QL Today readers that wish to continue their interest in the QL, either as article writers or as members of QUANTA.

OBITUARY

Tony Firshman

An extract from the full written comment on our website at ;
www.quanta.org.uk

William Newall Richardson sadly died on January 3rd, 2013 aged 94. Most of us will have known him or purchased from the company he ran after his fourth "retirement" in the mid 80s. He did eventually retire and lived his many remaining years in a magnificent sheltered apartment in Luton. I visited him there for lunch very many times with Vic Gerhardi (Z88 trader). We even had a day out to Southend in 2011 with Vic, his friend Denise and his father.

They all have some degree of physical disability and used sticks. Bill also was frail, walked very slowly, and with a stick if he could be persuaded to use it. We had some hilarious slow convoys in and out of establishments. We all crammed into the smallest of the many Southend Rossi establishments, blocking it completely and ate ice creams, messily. The pier directly opposite was closed as a barge had hit it the previous night. Sadly our 2013 trip was to take Bill to the end of the pier.

Bill was born on April 18, 1918 in East Riggs on the Solway Firth. As his daughter Sue puts it, slightly tongue in cheek: "This of course makes him Scottish". His family though soon moved to Swinton in Lancashire, where he went to school. I did not know this, and it explains the lack of a Scottish accent! His retirement project was to write a book on the history of the Scots. Sadly, when I offered to proof read, I saw it had not got beyond the introduction page. Many will remember the tartan cloth covering his stall at QL shows.

The online QL community



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www.qlforum.co.uk

<http://www.qlforum.co.uk>

SUBGROUP MEETINGS

Sub group meetings are where QUANTA members and non-QUANTA members get together to discuss, tinker and explore all things QL related. As we are in the middle of winter but approaching spring, this might be a good opportunity to dust off those cobwebs and visit your local sub-group. There will always be plenty to talk about and a fresh face (new or old is always welcome).

If there is not a sub-group near you why not hold one yourself? Contact the chairman on how to go about it, details on our contacts page (pg. 2).

THE WEST MIDLANDS QL USER GROUP

The meeting place is called the Bull, the address is 1 Price Street, Birmingham, B4 6JU. It is approximately 7 minutes walk from Snow Hill main-line railway station and has ample street parking nearby. Meetings remain open to QUANTA members and non-members alike.

After your first meeting you're expected to pay £1 each time towards the organisation and monthly newsletter costs - except once a year when the group pays all those who attend, £1 instead when we celebrate our birthday.

We provide food twice a year (for those who attend the AGM and the group's birthday party) and at meetings we discuss all sorts of things, QL related and otherwise, usually from about 8:20pm onwards till 10:30 or later. The group owns QL hardware, a disk library and subscribes to relevant magazines. People can join the mailing list for £3.50 per year, even if they can't attend regularly.

Meetings: Meetings are usually on the first and third Monday of each month (but not on bank holidays unless the previous one was cancelled for that reason). Contact: The contact number remains Mike Bedford White's, on 0121 605 4438, anytime after 11am.

QUANTA DORSET SUBGROUP – Dorset

Meetings are held, on the second Sunday of each month between 2.00pm and 5.00pm. For location please contact: John Mason - 01425 275894

LONDON QL AND QUANTA GROUP

Meetings are held in the School Room, which is the basement of the Borough Welsh Congregational Chapel, 90, Southwark Bridge Road, London SE1. This is almost opposite the junction with Marshalsea Road, at the other end of which, 5 minutes walk away, is the Borough Underground Station. Free parking is easily available in Southwark Bridge Road for road users, Cyclists are welcome. Members currently each pay a subscription of £40 per year towards the cost of the hire of the hall and a small additional charge is made for tea/coffee - biscuits are then provided free.

Please bring your QL equipment if possible, all types welcome, e.g., PC portable running emulators. The Group has some systems stored at the venue for its use. In addition, there are lots of donated second user equipment, books, magazines, etc., available for purchase. Time: 2.00 pm. to 5.00 pm., on the second Sunday of the month. No meetings are held in December / January - winter break, or July / August –the summer break, giving 8 meetings a year. Malcolm Cadman 020 8691 5780

[Email: QL@mcad.demon.co.uk](mailto:QL@mcad.demon.co.uk)

SOLENT SUBGROUP

Meetings are at 'Sarisbury Green Parish Rooms' (http://sqpr.org.uk/?page_id=28) On the first Saturday each month from 1PM to 5PM. Contact Graham Evans 023 8040 3350. or send an email to : graham@grayfire.f9.co.uk

NEMQLUG - NORTH EAST MANCHESTER QL USER GROUP

Meetings are held at 181, Urmston Lane, Stretford, Manchester. M32 9EH (Near Junction 7 of M60 Motorway, which was Junction 7 M63 Motorway). Our informal meetings start at 7 pm. and finish at 11 pm. All welcome to our meetings which are held on the last Thursday of each month (except December). Contact John/Sarah Gilpin 0161 865 2872 for further details. or by email to : (thegilpins@btinternet.com)

SCOTTISH QL USERS GROUP

SQLUG meets at George Gwilt's home every second Sunday in the month. Please contact George Gwilt before coming, to get the location by email to : Gdgqler@gmail.com

SURREY QUANTA SUBGROUP (SQSG)

The group is currently trying other venues in the Leatherhead - Epsom area. If you plan to attend but do not get our emails, please phone or email Ken Bain for the latest location. Meetings are 8.00 to 10.00 pm on a Wednesday, hopefully last of each month (none in December), but this can vary. Contact Ken Bain 01932 347432 (to midnight), alternative email to : kenb@bcs.org.uk

SUSSEX QL USER GROUP

Currently without a meeting place, anyone interested should contact Roy Wood 01273 430501 or email to : gbranch@gbranch.demon.co.uk or Keith Mitchell - 01903 742263.

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